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ABSTRACT

To investigate the effect of time restraints on the diagnostic test scores of Native American students entering Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, two groups of students at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, were given the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, (Blue Level), 1977 edition. The test scores indicated that the experimental group, with no time restraints, scored higher than the control group, which was required to finish the test under the time restrictions imposed by the test's authors. Also, a smaller percentage of students in the experimental group was assigned to the remedial reading laboratory. Therefore, it was recommended that the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test be given to SIPI students without the time limits suggested by the test's authors for the following reasons: (1) it would allow the SIPI students the additional time necessary for a second language speaker to interpret the question both in the specific Indian language and English; (2) it would minimize group testing which creates an aura of competition and is not encouraged in many Indian cultures; (3) it would allow an individual to be tested without constant monitoring by an instructor; (4) it would not emphasize "time stress" which is avoided in many Indian cultures; (5) it would remove the additional test anxiety created by time limits. (AN)

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THE EFFECT OF ELIMINATING TIME RESTRAINTS ON A STANDARDIZED TEST WITH AMERICAN INDIAN ADULTS

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Native American students attending Bureau of Indian Affairs schools are required to undergo a series of diagnostic tests upon entering. Many of these tests are criterion-referenced, however, the majority are standardized and have been purchased by the Bureau of Indian Affairs from major test publishers. The tests are generally administered along the guidelines recommended by the authors/publishers. If, for example, the test's designers urge the usage of time restraints, then these restraints are generally imposed.

PURPOSE

This study intends to investigate the relationship between Native American students' scores on a standardized test and the elimination of time restraints. Two groups of students, one experimental and one control, were given a standardized test; however, the experimental group was able to complete the test without having any time restrictions. The control group was given the same standardized test; however, the published time restraints recommended by the tests's authors were imposed.

HYPOTHESIS

This writer suggests that the imposition of time restraints affects students' scores and if these restraints were eliminated, the scores will improve.

SUBJECTS

The sample population for this study were students attending the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. S.I.P.I. is a post-secondary school with a curriculum emphasis on technical/vocational subjects. The students are all Native Americans and represent approximately 85 recognized tribes.

The experimental group of students entered S.I.P.I. in the Spring/ Summer of 1980. These students, numbering 59 were given the diagnostic test during the period 4/16/80 - 8/12/80.

The control group of students entered S.I.P.I. in the Fall of 1980. These students, numbering 75 were given the diagnostic test during the period 9/3/80 - 9/22/80.

TESTING INSTRUMENT

The standardized test used in this study is the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, (Blue Level), 1977 Edition. The basic intent of the test, as identified by the authors: . . . "to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in reading."

Students receive a total score (shown in grade equivalence) in Reading as well as four sub-scores, each representing a specific portion of the Stanford test. These four sub-scores reflect: Reading Comprehension, Word Meaning/Word Parts, Phonic/Structural Analysis, Skimming/Scanning and Fast Reading. Students in this study will be evaluated on each of these four sub-areas, as well as on the total scores.

The time controls include:

Reading Comprehension - 36 minutes

Word Meaning/Word Parts - 24 minutes

Phonic/Structural Analysis - 21 minutes

Skimming/Scanning and Fast Reading - 16 minutes

PROCEDURES

Incoming students at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute are given the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test during "new-student" orientation. Testing is done in the Supportive Education Building under the direction and guidance of Mr. Ray E. Brown, Reading Specialist.

DATA

Experimental Group (59)

test or sub-test	points	mean grade equivalence
Total Reading Test	5780	9.7966
sub-test a) Reading Comprehension	5637	9.5542
sub-test b) Word Meaning/ Word Parts	5385	9.1271
sub-test c) Phonic Analysis/ Structural Analysis	5137	8.7067
sub-test d) Skimming/Scanning Fast Reading	7339	12.4389

Control Group (75)

test or sub-test	points	mean grade equivalence
Total Reading Test	7085	9.4466
sub-test a) Reading Comprehension	6724	8.9653
sub-test b) Word Meaning/ Word Parts	6674	8.8986
sub-test c) Phonic Analysis/ Structural Analysis	6386	8.5146
sub-test d) Skimming/Scanning Fast Reading	8475	11.300

RESULTS

Experimental Group

Total Reading Test - an increase of 0.3509

Sub-test a - an increase of 0.5889

Sub-test b - an increase of 0.2285

Sub-test c - an increase of 0.1921

Sub-test d - an increase of 1.1389

The test scores of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test indicated that the experimental group scored higher on all of the sub-tests as well as on the total test.

DISCUSSION

Native American students, at S.I.P.I., when taking the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, usually are operating within the time confines of the test's authors. However, for this experiment students were able to take the test without any of these restraints. Results indicated that the experimental group had a mean increase (expressed in grade equivalence) of 0.3500 and increases on all of the four sub-tests ranging from 0.1927 to 1.1389.

USES OF THE TEST AT S.I.P.I.

Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute uses the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test as a placement test for the remedial reading laboratory. If a student scores below 8.0 (grade equivalence) the student is assigned to the laboratory. If the student scores above the 8.0 score the student is exempt from the laboratory.

In the experimental setting (with no time restraints) 12 of the 59 participating students, 20.338%, would have been assigned to the laboratory.

In the control setting (with time restraints) 18 of the 75 participating students, 24.000%, would have been assigned to the laboratory.

The students undergoing the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test scored 3.662% higher when allowed to take the test without the limitations of time restraints.

Setting	Students Identified As Remedial	Students Identified As Not Being Remedial
Experimental	20.338%	79.662%
Control	24.000%	76.000%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, when allowed to complete the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test without time restrictions, performed at a higher achievement level as measured by two criteria: (a) overall grade equivalence and (b) percentage of students assigned to the remedial reading laboratory.

The higher academic levels, although statistically significant, were not deemed academically significant. Hence, the writer recommends that the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test be given to SIPI students without the time limits suggested by the test's authors for the following reasons.

a) It would allow the SIPI student the additional time necessary for a second language speaker to interpret the question both in the specific Indian language and English.

b) It would minimize group testing which, by its very nature, creates an aura of competition which is not encouraged in many Indian cultures.

c) It would allow an individual to be tested without constant monitoring by an instructor.

d) It would not emphasize "time stress" which is avoided in many Indian cultures.

e) It would remove the additional test anxiety created by time limits.

CONCLUSION

The imposition of time restraints in a standardized testing program at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute does not significantly affect the students' test scores. Because of the uniqueness of this study's sample the writer suggests that the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test be given to entering students without time restrictions.